

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
805 SW Broadway, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97205

AUG 25 2016

EPA-REGION 10

RE: Harbor Comments

I have lived in Portland for more than 60 years, and I still work here as a receptionist. I find it stunning that the plan to clean up Portland Harbor relies entirely on data from eight and twelve years ago while ignoring data from only two years ago. The more recent data shows that almost half of the contaminants that were in the water have already been eliminated by letting nature run its course. Dredging up and transporting buried contaminants will only undo the progress that has been made. Natural decontamination should be allowed to continue, assisted by targeted actions that we know will help it along. If you truly want to help the environment, you need to do the least amount of harm possible in the process.

It is irresponsible to spend a billion dollars of taxpayer money on a cleanup plan that is not based on the most recent data and might not do better than one that cost a tenth as much. Property taxes and rent will have to go up to pay for this profligate spending, they'll become a burden we can't absorb. People's incomes are not going up as it is. Families will be hit especially hard, and some may have to make difficult choices. It starts to impact all kinds of things -- do you get medicine, insurance, do you drop down to one car, and even more.

Under the current plan, the riverfront would become the site of permanent construction until the project is finished. This would impact everyone, from the little retail shops to the people who work in the big business buildings. For years, likely decades, traffic would be different, parking would be difficult, business would be disrupted, and jobs would be lost. Besides the economic harm, there would be a psychological effect. Instead, local people should be allowed to help come up with a less intrusive plan that helps decontaminate the river without unnecessarily inflicting damage on the economy.

Sincerely,

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Portland, OR 97236